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MYTHS OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE #272:

The Director Can Do It All!

Waiting. Poised for action. The call requesting the scan came about an hour ago. The resident responded, the technologist was paged. Everything's going according to plan. A quick walk now, turn on the lights, power up the computer, make the bed, get everything ready for the study.

Waiting, still poised. Page again. Call the technologist at home. No answer. No answer to the page. It's late. The first weekend on call for the new house staff attracted the usual array of late night, rarely indicated requests for scans. I thought we were prepared, but what happened to my technologist? The beeper must have malfunctioned. Can we get the scan underway on our own?

Sure.

A few years ago, I took that refresher course with our new technologists in anticipation of a night like this. I should be able to do this study without a hitch. Now, what to do first? Radiation safety: lab coat—check; gloves—check; radiation badge—check. O.K. —Pharmacy manual in hand, into the radiopharmacy to make the DISIDA for the hepatobiliary scan. Start up the pharmacy computer; log in, enter initials—unknown initials—can't log in. How can this be? My own machine doesn't know who I am. Try again, same result.

Fidgeting. Not so poised. I can't let this modern tomfoolery stop us now. There is a sick patient to be studied. Vials in hand, ready to elute. Let's just go ahead and do it. Need the moly shield. What about the chromatogram strips? Where is the acetone? Trying to make this stuff is like cooking in someone else's kitchen. Everything is somewhat familiar, but still not the same as it was during that introductory course so long ago.

Persevering. No more poised. With my experienced resident nearby, we have to move ahead. He arranges patient transport as I am about to start the elution. What's that, an alarm? No, the phone. The resident answers and, after a brief pause, yells down the hall: "Ms --- just got the page. She said don't touch a thing! She will be right in."

Saved by the bell. The myth lives on. We really could have done it, couldn't we? It will take at least another night on call and another beeper malfunction to know. Hopefully this won't happen soon.

H. William Strauss
Editor, *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*